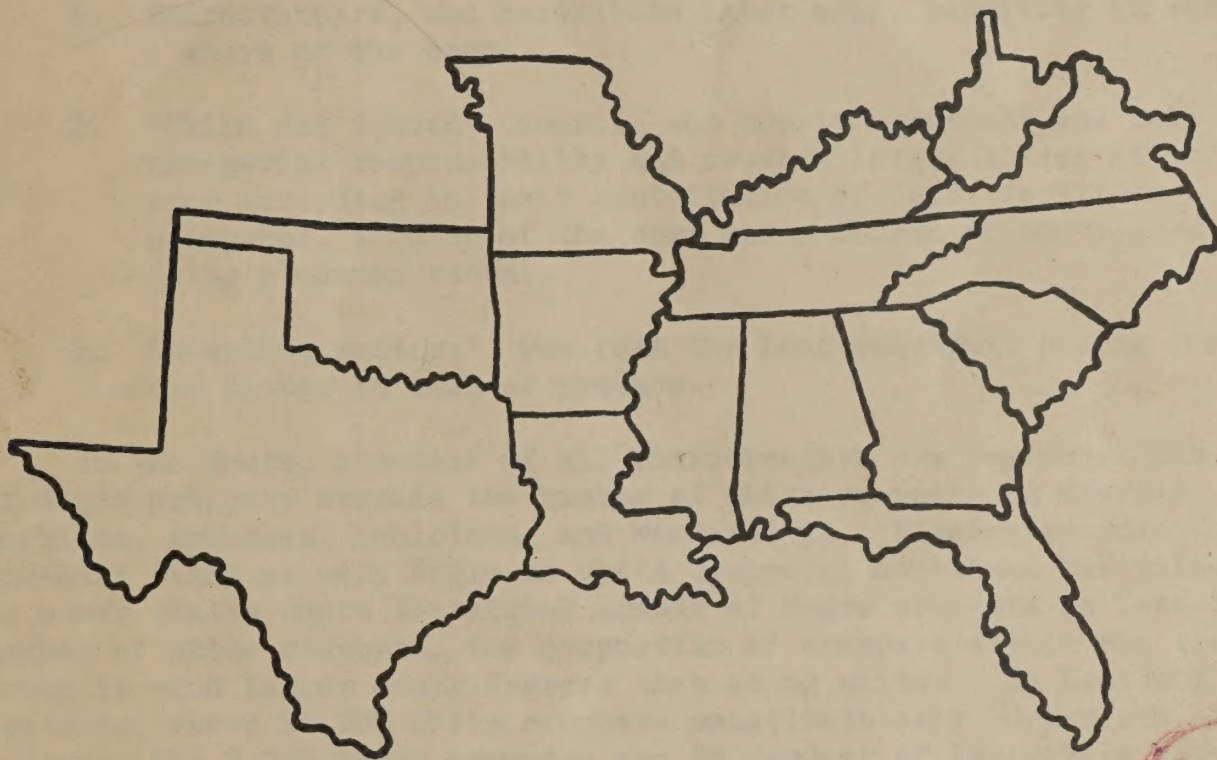


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THE SOUTHERN NEGRO ON THE FARM



MORE THAN FOUR AND ONE-HALF MILLION
INDIVIDUALS - 38 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL
NEGRO POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES
- ARE LIVING ON FARMS IN THE SIXTEEN
SOUTHERN STATES



THE SOUTHERN NEGRO ON THE FARM

HIS PROBLEMS AND WHAT THE FSA IS DOING ABOUT THEM

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Farming is both a business and a way of life for half of all Negroes in America. Ninety-five percent of all Negro farm operators are in the South, and more than three-fourths of these are tenants. Farm tenants fall, roughly, into three classes:

1. Sharecroppers, who contribute labor only, receiving in return a share of the crop.
2. "Third and fourth" tenants, who supply equipment and bear some managerial responsibility and receive larger shares of the crop according to their contribution of feed, fertilizer, and equipment, a third of the corn and a fourth of the cotton being a common rental.
3. "Standing renters", who rent the land outright, paying for its use either in cash or produce.

In the South, one-half of all sharecroppers are Negroes. The number of Negro croppers exceeds the number of white croppers in Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Mississippi has three and one-half times as many Negro as white croppers; Louisiana has twice as many. In other states where the actual number of Negro croppers is less than the number of white croppers, the proportion of croppers within the racial group is much larger among Negroes than among whites. In Kentucky, for instance, where 30,258 white croppers constitute only 30 percent of white tenants, the 2,736 Negro croppers are 65 percent of Kentucky's Negro tenants. Other states show even higher proportions. Mississippi's Negro tenants are 71 percent sharecroppers, and 82 percent of all Georgia's Negro tenants are in this class. Half of all Negro children growing to manhood and womanhood on Southern farms face the drudgery and neglect typical of most croppers' children of any race.

Chief among the evils which the poor man on the farm -- small owner, tenant or laborer -- has to face are poor housing, high mortality, insecurity and debt.

Bad housing and sanitation are reflected in hookworm and anemia. Faulty diets result in pellagra. The yearly toll from death and disease adds to the burden of indebtedness, while beneath all these hurtful conditions lies the menace of insecurity, crippling both landlord and tenant in any effort toward progress.

1. WHAT IS THE FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND WHAT IS IT DOING TO CORRECT SUCH CONDITIONS WHERE THEY EXIST?

A. What It Is:

1. It is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, set up to help needy farm families which are unable to get help elsewhere.

B. What It Does:

1. It makes rehabilitation loans, at 5 percent interest, for periods of one to five years. With such a loan, the farmer buys the things he needs to make a living from the land -- wagons, mules, milk cows, seed, fertilizer, etc. Usually included in the loan are reserve funds sufficient to provide the family with food and clothing through a crop year. Farmers obtaining these loans cooperate with Farm Security Administration farm and home management supervisors in making and carrying out plans for each year's operations.
 - a. Every farm plan calls for the production at home of enough food to supply the farm family with a properly balanced diet, thus preventing dietary diseases and improving general health.
 - b. The farm plan also calls for the production at home of ample feed for the livestock, increasing the value of the stock and conserving cash.
 - c. The plan calls for the conservation of the soil by sound farm practices, such as crop rotation, planting of cover crops, and erosion control.

Through rehabilitation loans, families are learning to keep their books, make their budgets, and live within them. Approximately 50,000 such loans, representing 12.5 percent of the total, have been made to Negro farmers in the last four years. Negro farmers are 12.6 percent of America's farm operators.

2. It enables selected renters, sharecroppers or farm laborers with energy, ambition and a good record to become established as owners on desirable land through long-time loans in larger amounts, repayable over a period of 40 years. Guidance in sound farming practices accompany each loan. During the first year of operation of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act -- 1937-38 -- 265 loans were made to Negro tenants. This was 18.6 percent of the total loans made in the Southern states, where nearly all Negro farmers are located. Negro tenancy in this area is 34.1

Applications for 1937-38 were 19.3 percent of the total and for 1938-39 were 26.4 percent. Loans for 1938-39 were 23 percent, making an average of 20 percent for the first two years of operation.

- a. There were five times as many Negro applications the second

year as the first year -- 26,989 as compared with 5,089. Figures for whites rose proportionately.

3. It is trying to develop better social and economic patterns in agriculture by establishing homestead projects. Some of them are new communities, while others consist of scattered individual farms. More than 1,800 Negro families were living on such projects in January, 1940.
 - a. Farmsteads on these projects are provided with houses, barns, and out-buildings. Representatives of the Farm Security Administration guide these homesteaders in their farm work, exactly as they help FSA rehabilitation borrowers.
 - b. In addition to this assistance, project farmers learn to farm cooperatively. Cooperative stores, gins and marketing services are acquainting them with the benefits of cooperation.
 - c. Negro farmers, together with others, are profiting by this experience. They are established on 31 projects in 13 Southeastern States.
4. FSA also has set up rental cooperatives, through which groups of tenants can improve their tenure and living conditions by leasing large tracts of land with the help of FSA loans, and operating them cooperatively, usually with an option to buy within a given period.
 - a. Rental cooperatives are being set up in the Mississippi Delta and other large plantation areas. Color ratio on these projects is determined by the needs in the area. 427 Negro families were farming on ten rental cooperatives in January, 1940. They constituted 47 percent of all families so located.
 - b. Projects on which Negro youths can secure "internships" in modern farm practices are pointing the way for the coming generation.
 - c. By encouraging long-term written leases, FSA is trying to cure some of the worst evils of tenancy. Such leases benefit both owner and tenant, since they encourage better housing and better land use.
5. FSA supplies, without cost, a debt adjustment service which is available to all farmers. Volunteer local committees have arranged debt adjustments which have saved American farmers \$78,807,693 in the last four years. There is no racial breakdown on these figures, but case histories on file at Farm Security Administration offices show that Negro farmers especially are benefiting by this service.

6. It offers loans to small groups of farmers unable to purchase livestock, heavy farm equipment and other needed services individually, enabling them to purchase these for community use. Negroes are making increasing use of these community services.
 7. It is releasing land to its proper use by limiting loans to farmers established on land suitable for cultivation, and by assisting in the relocation of farmers situated on sub-marginal or cut-over lands.
 - a. It is restoring land to cultivation through erosion control by its borrowers, and by instructing and directing them in soil-building practices.
 8. It is shaping patterns in rural education, by providing adequate school buildings and equipment on many projects. State and County school authorities cooperate in supplying competent staffs to teach subjects carefully correlated with rural life. Negro tenants particularly are welcoming this educational guidance.
 9. It is supplying medical aid through the establishment of group medical care associations, through which FSA borrowers receive service of physicians and nurses at minimum rates, supplanting fear, neglect, and superstition with skilled assistance.
- III. HOW IS THIS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE FSA AND THE FARMER DIRECTED?
- A. By close cooperation between FSA supervisors and borrowers, planning together for the development of each farm, the cash crop, garden produce, canning, farm methods, and farm bookkeeping, including budget and inventory.

IV. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE RESULTS OF THIS PARTNERSHIP?

- A. Increased self-respect as evidenced by repayments -- often made ahead of time.
- B. Increases in net worth, in terms of increased canning, livestock and equipment and improved diet and housing. Increase in net worth is also reflected in better school attendance among the children of borrower families.
- C. General improvement in tenureship and in owner-tenant relationships.
- D. Increased ownership.
- E. Increased knowledge of modern agricultural methods.
- F. Improvement in health and living standards.

COMPARATIVE FIGURES ON DISTRIBUTION OF FARM TENURESHIP
AMONG NEGROES AND WHITES IN THE SOUTH

Negroes are found in all agricultural tenure classes from owners to sharecroppers. Ownership of land among Negroes is controlled by a number of factors, among which are accessibility of credit and the presence or absence of opportunity to buy productive land where credit can be obtained.

In the tables which follow, the first column--the number of individuals on farms--is presented chiefly as a yardstick for measuring the importance of tenure situations among Negroes on farms in the several states of the South.

In the second column--operators--are included all persons who actually operate farms, whether they are owners, renters, third and fourth tenants, or croppers. The figures in this column, therefore, are overall figures, including those in the owners and tenants columns. In the last column, figures for sharecroppers--lowest of the tenure classes--are shown separately from the figures for tenants, of which they are a part.

All owners, plus all classes of tenants, with the addition of a very small number of farm managers not listed here, equals the number of persons actually operating farms.

KEY: UPPER FIGURES WHITE; LOWER FIGURES NEGRO

STATE	FARM POPULATION (Individuals on Farms)	OPERATORS	OWNERS	TENANTS	CHOPPERS
	%	%	%	%	%
Maryland	199,735 41,861 <u>241,596</u>	39,595 4,906 <u>44,501</u>	28,798 2,728 <u>31,526</u>	9,976 2,135 <u>12,111</u>	1,061 600 <u>1,661</u>
	82.7 17.3 100	89.0 11.0 100	91.4 8.6 100	82.4 17.6 100	63.9 36.1 100
Missouri	1,154,644 28,855 <u>1,183,499</u>	97.6 2.4 100			
Kentucky	1,264,503 43,313 <u>1,307,816</u>	96.6 3.4 100	170,609 4,052 <u>174,661</u>	99,028 4,187 <u>103,215</u>	30,258 2,756 <u>33,014</u>
	96.6 3.4 100	97.1 2.9 100	97.7 2.3 100	96.0 4.0 100	91.7 8.3 100
N. Carolina	1,162,495 460,986 <u>1,623,481</u>	72.0 28.0 100	137,738 20,373 <u>158,111</u>	93,173 48,985 <u>142,158</u>	36,392 30,001 <u>66,393</u>
	72.0 28.0 100	77.0 23.0 100	87.2 12.8 100	65.6 34.4 100	54.9 45.1 100
Tennessee	1,138,503 169,917 <u>1,308,420</u>	87.1 12.9 100	138,853 7,843 <u>146,696</u>	100,062 26,545 <u>126,607</u>	35,381 16,096 <u>51,477</u>
	87.1 12.9 100	87.5 12.5 100	94.7 5.3 100	79.0 21. 100	68.8 31.2 100
Virginia	784,460 269,009 <u>1,053,469</u>	74.5 25.5 100	110,477 27,662 <u>138,139</u>	42,874 15,512 <u>58,386</u>	12,137 6,102 <u>18,239</u>
	74.5 25.5 100	78.2 21.8 100	80.0 20.0 100	73.5 26.5 100	66.6 33.4 100
W. Virginia	557,664 4,255 <u>561,919</u>	99.3 .7 100	76,622 511 <u>77,133</u>	26,846 175 <u>27,021</u>	3,032 11 <u>3,043</u>
	99.3 .7 100	99.4 .6 100	99.4 .6 100	99.4 .6 100	99.7 .3 100
Alabama	895,368 490,706 <u>1,386,074</u>	64.6 35.4 100	80,983 15,709 <u>96,692</u>	100,705 75,542 <u>176,247</u>	34,717 33,257 <u>67,974</u>
	64.6 35.4 100	66.7 33.3 100	83.8 16.2 100	57.2 42.8 100	51.1 48.9 100

STATE	FARM POPULATION (Individuals on Farms)	OPERATORS	OWNERS	TENANTS	CROPPERS
	%	%	%	%	%
Florida	234,079 85,579 <u>319,658</u> 73.3 26.7 100	60,093 12,764 <u>72,857</u> 82.5 17.5 100	42,627 6,792 <u>49,419</u> 86.3 13.7 100	14,777 5,922 <u>20,699</u> 71.4 28.6 100	3,153 1,521 <u>4,674</u> 67.5 32.5 100
Georgia	880,613 525,331 <u>1,405,944</u> 62.7 37.3 100	177,259 73,285 <u>250,544</u> 70.8 29.2 100	74,626 10,571 <u>85,197</u> 87.6 12.4 100	101,649 62,682 <u>164,331</u> 61.9 38.1 100	41,672 51,404 <u>93,076</u> 44.8 55.2 100
S. Carolina	438,404 510,031 <u>948,435</u> 46.3 53.7 100	88,967 76,537 <u>165,504</u> 53.8 46.2 100	43,548 18,394 <u>61,942</u> 70.4 29.6 100	44,802 58,124 <u>102,926</u> 43.6 56.4 100	16,001 31,046 <u>47,047</u> 34.1 65.9 100
Arkansas	859,171 321,067 <u>1,180,238</u> 72.8 27.2 100	181,713 71,300 <u>253,013</u> 71.9 28.1 100	89,319 11,343 <u>100,662</u> 88.8 11.2 100	91,819 59,940 <u>151,759</u> 60.6 39.4 100	24,625 40,978 <u>65,603</u> 37.6 62.4 100
Louisiana	488,211 371,140 <u>859,351</u> 56.9 43.1 100	99,901 70,315 <u>170,216</u> 58.7 41.3 100	50,481 10,839 <u>61,320</u> 82.4 17.6 100	48,921 59,456 <u>108,377</u> 45.2 54.8 100	16,706 33,513 <u>50,219</u> 33.3 66.7 100
Mississippi	613,867 719,114 <u>1,332,981</u> 46.1 53.9 100	142,677 169,006 <u>311,683</u> 45.8 54.2 100	71,936 21,288 <u>93,224</u> 77.2 22.8 100	69,871 147,693 <u>217,564</u> 32.2 67.8 100	30,757 106,156 <u>136,913</u> 22.5 77.5 100
Oklahoma	916,926 98,636 <u>1,015,562</u> 90.3 9.7 100	195,501 17,824 <u>213,325</u> 91.7 8.3 100	75,127 6,762 <u>81,889</u> 91.8 8.2 100	119,615 11,046 <u>130,661</u> 91.6 8.4 100	10,959 2,681 <u>13,650</u> 80.3 19.7 100
Texas	1,944,707 387,986 <u>2,332,693</u> 83.4 16.6 100	429,232 71,785 <u>501,017</u> 85.7 14.3 100	190,640 20,800 <u>211,440</u> 90.2 9.8 100	235,162 50,941 <u>286,103</u> 82.2 17.8 100	50,793 25,675 <u>76,468</u> 66.5 33.5 100

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